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## House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, February 9, 2009, at 2 p.m.

## Senate

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2009

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JEFF MERKLEY, a Senator from the State of Oregon.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

God of our fathers and mothers, Your mighty hands have brought our Nation to this moment in history. Remind our lawmakers of Your powerful deeds that have sustained us through the storms of the past. May the memories of what You have already done for America bring us peace as daunting challenges assail. Lord, Your power carried us through wars, calamities, depression, and pestilences, keeping our fragile dream of liberty alive. As we now have an opportunity to play our part in liberty's drama, guide us with Your wisdom and protect us with Your love. When answers elude us and certainty cannot be found, strengthen us with Your grace, uphold us with Your power, and guide us by Your providence. We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JEFF MERKLEY led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication

to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, February 6, 2009.

*To the Senate:*

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JEFF MERKLEY, a Senator from the State of Oregon, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. MERKLEY thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

### UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, around midnight last night I was in conversation with the President and some others, and the President indicated that this morning, unemployment numbers would come out, and they would be somewhat scary. That was absolutely true. At 8:30 this morning, the unemployment numbers were reported for January, and they hit a 16-year high of 7.6 percent. That is averaged across the United States. Some places are much worse than that. My State of Nevada is an example. We are the fifth highest unemployed State in the country.

Some States now have over 10 percent unemployment.

Mr. President, if this were the top and we were headed down, that would be one thing, but it doesn't appear that is the case. It appears unemployment rates are going to get higher and higher. The business crisis is growing worse and worse, housing problems have become more complex and more difficult, and the lending freeze has not passed. Small businesses are shutting their doors.

In a Las Vegas paper today, to use an example, a book store in Henderson, NV—the second largest city in Nevada—had closed. The people had invested their entire life's savings in this little business—\$350,000—and they are broke and the business is shuttered. This is happening all over the country. In January alone, 600,000 people lost their jobs. In Nevada, the unemployment rate is now over 9 percent. Leading economists are now comparing today's crisis to the early years of the Great Depression.

Now, Mr. President, we are not in a depression. But as I mentioned yesterday, during the Great Depression stock market values went down 89 percent, unemployment was 25 percent, and millions of others were underemployed. We are not there, but we have to do something to turn this around or we will be there. That is why the American people are looking at us to do something about it—to create jobs. That is what we need to do.

Now, the package that President Obama has come up with is a mix of tax cuts and spending, and we are now

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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